(b) whether the Commission has given special emphasis on recommendations for community participation at local level and decentralization of educational institutes;

(c) the role and significance of bodies like UGC, AICTE, NCTE, MCI, NAAC etc. for higher education; and

(d) the steps being taken by Government regarding these issues?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) National Knowledge Commission (NKC) has recommended the establishment of an Independent Regulatory Authority for Higher Education (IRAHE) which would be responsible for setting criteria and deciding entry and also accord degree granting powers to higher education institutions and that the role of UGC would be limited to disbursement of grants and maintenance of institutions in higher education. According to the NKC the entry regulatory function of regulation in professional education would be performed by the proposed IRAHE.

(d) The need for an overarching independent body for overseeing the entire spectrum of higher education has been accepted by Government as one of its priorities.

Optimum utilization of education infrastructure

369. SHRI PARIMAL NATHWANI: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to run education institutes, colleges and schools in multiple shifts for optimum utilization of the education infrastructure available and increasing the literacy ratio; and

(b) if so, the details of action taken by Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) and (b) Keeping in view, the regional imbalance of the number of seats in various States of the country, the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) has allowed second shift of engineering colleges in existing colleges only in those States where the number of seats available in engineering colleges per lakh of population are less than the all India average. Further, in order to reduce imbalance between engineering education and polytechnic education. AICTE has permitted second shift of Polytechnic in existing Polytechnic Institutions and also a second shift of Polytechnic in existing Engineering Institution. 41 Kendriya Vidyalayas are also functioning in double shifts.